Lopas, Sarah

From: sel.scwf@gmail.com on behalf of Sarah Lloyd [sarahl@scwf.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 01, 2010 2:52 PM
To: LeeCOLAEIS Resource
Subject: Comments on Duke Energy Lee Nuclear Station
Attachments: Duke Lee Nuclear Station.pdf

Attached is a letter from SCWF Executive Director, Ben Gregg. He would like the comments on the record on the NRC side at the public meeting. Please contact him at ben@scwf.org if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Sarah Lloyd

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Executive Director U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Chief, Rules, Directives and Editing Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration
Mailstop TWB-05-B01M
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Subject: SCWF Comments on Duke Energy Lee Nuclear Station, Make-Up Pond C
Ref: William States Lee III Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, COLA

To Whom It May Concern:

These comments concern Duke Energy's proposal to construct the Lee Nuclear Station in Cherokee County. This facility is to be co-located with the Ninety-Nine Islands Dam and Reservoir, an existing century-old, FERC-licensed hydroelectric facility on the Broad River. We are also aware that as a part of the proposed facilities Duke plans to construct a 620-acre pond (Make-Up Pond C) on London Creek, to provide a back-up water source for its proposed Lee Nuclear Station. We understand this pond would be a "drought contingency pond" for use during exceptional drought periods.

SCWF offers this letter in response to the NRC's solicitation of public comments for its 17 June 2010 public meeting, in Gaffney, South Carolina, with respect to Duke's proposed Make-Up Pond C, and integration of this facility into the proposed Lee Nuclear Station's operations.

These comments pertain to specific environmental issues for the proposed project and do not address more general and national issues such as nuclear plant financing and the disposal of high level reactor waste.

As South Carolina's oldest and largest conservation organization, and as an affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, SCWF is heavily engaged in advocating for an energy production portfolio in South Carolina that minimizes environmental impacts to our state's natural resources, and that progressively reduces our dependence on carbon-based power sources. To that end, we accept the positive performance record of the four existing commercial nuclear power facilities in SC over the past several decades. The nuclear units at these locations currently provide for roughly half of South Carolina's power needs. SCWF has long encouraged the use of energy sources that are carbon-neutral, and while nuclear technologies present unique challenges and risks, they are a recognized carbon-reduction bridge to a clean energy future. The safe and efficient performance of this technology is well established in our state.

SCWF also recognizes that the complex infrastructure proposed at the Lee Nuclear Station will have some undesirable environmental impacts. We also note that the existing Cherokee Lake, an impoundment constructed and owned by SCDNR and located upstream on London Creek from the proposed Make-Up

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Pond C, as well as the Ninety-Nine Islands Dam and Reservoir, have already had long-standing impacts to the water resources in proximity to the proposed Lee Nuclear Station.

We also know that nuclear power is highly water intensive. In the past SCWF has worked with our state's utilities to mitigate environmental impacts of their facilities, including impacts to water quality, and to provide for sustainable stream flows. It is SCWF's view that the proposed water management plan, to include the construction and use of Make-Up Pond C, will help to balance and mitigate water resource and habitat impacts from the proposed station.

The Broad River is an irreplaceable resource to our state, providing a unique suite of habitats critical for both wildlife and outdoor recreation. In this reach of the Broad River we have one of the state's few smallmouth bass fisheries. Also, downstream of the proposed Lee facilities the Broad River enjoys our state's Scenic River status, reflecting a stream of exceptional quality and diversity. Hence, measures to protect these assets are not only prudent, but should be required by the license and related permits.

The proposed Make-Up Pond C will provide a means for Duke Energy to maintain continuity of its operations at the Lee Nuclear Station during exceptional drought periods. More importantly, use of this "drought contingency pond" as an alternate water source during these climatic extremes will eliminate a dependence on withdrawals solely from the Broad River for station operations. As we have witnessed during the drought conditions that have dominated our state for much of the last 12 years, under severe and prolonged drought, even a river the size of the Broad becomes stressed. The availability of Make-Up Pond C will essentially establish a floor for withdrawals from the river under these severe conditions. Shifting to Make-Up Pond C will, therefore, substantially mitigate the impacts of the proposed LNS operations during these especially sensitive periods, thereby providing for baseflows protective of recreational and riparian needs downstream, as well as for habitat and wildlife.

SCWF has partnered with numerous other conservation organizations over the past several years to encourage our legislature to pass the "South Carolina Surface Water Withdrawal and Reporting Act" (the Act). After years of debate, compromise language was passed by our legislature earlier this month. Based on the provisions of this statute, and the water management plan proposed for the Lee Nuclear Station by Duke Energy, to include the operations of Make-Up Pond C and the Ninety-Nine Islands Reservoir, it is our understanding that Duke's proposed water withdrawals are consistent with the spirit, intent, and specifications of the Act. Likewise, the proposed water management plan presented by Duke appears consistent with the requirements of its FERC license for the Ninety-Nine Islands Hydroelectric Station.

SCWF appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed facilities, and we will continue to participate in review of the Lee Nuclear Station licensing and permitting processes going forward. The critical technical review by agencies, including compliance with NEPA requirements, is certainly appropriate and wise with a project of this scope. SCWF supports rigorous review by Federal and State regulatory and natural resource agencies to confirm that all regulatory requirements are met, and that prudent stewardship of our natural resources, including water resources, is assured.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Ben Gregg

Ben Gregg
Executive Director